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CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE.

Discouragement of Collegiate Education by the State of New York. By
REV. S. W. PRATT. New York Evangelist, September 14th, 1893.

The educational system of the state is a double-header. The Regents supervise high schools, academies, and colleges. The Superintendent of Public Instruction has control of the normal schools, graduation from which carries perpetual license to teach in any school in the state. This license is granted to graduates of any course of a normal school. One may graduate from the high school after passing all the regents' examinations, and in order to teach be required the next day to pass another examination on the same studies under the direction of the State Superintendent and be rejected, one department certifying to his scholarship and another denying it. The normal school course is essentially that of a high school with an added course in the study of methods and practice lessons in teaching. Teachers' classes in the high school give attention to these subjects but give no privileges toward teaching. The graduate of a high school may enter a normal school and for six months or a year's study receive a life license to teach. On the other hand, he may go to college and at the close of four year's study be subjected, if he would teach, to an examination in the primary grade on an equality with teachers of district schools. After doing this for three years, he may apply to the state superintendent for a life license to teach, and through his favor may obtain it, not as a right. This same college graduate will be teaching Greek and Latin and other higher studies, for which he is never examined at all under the superintendent's system. A great number of graduates of high schools who would otherwise take a college course are by this system switched off to the normal schools and go no higher in their education. On the other hand, normal graduates often undertake high school work for which they are not properly fitted. The normal schools are doing a great and necessary work, but the state, by not giving the college graduates license to teach because they are graduates, is hindering collegiate education and doing a great injustice to college graduates. If necessary the college might be required to give instruction in pedagogy.

[The state of affairs complained of in this article is manifestly absurd and ought not to exist, but we are not so sure as the writer that all college graduates should receive license to teach because they are graduates. We believe that all colleges should conduct courses in pedagogy in which a certain amount of practical work should be given. A college graduate who has taken this course in pedagogy and has had a reasonable experience in teaching ought to be given a teacher's certificate.—EDS. SCHOOL REVIEW.]

Summary of Results. Report of Commissioner of Education, 1889-90'
Vol. I, pp. 24-26.

The vocations of man that have for their object the production of comfort and ornament and the care for man's spiritual welfare, are bound to grow from more to more with the increased application of machinery to productive industry, while a smaller proportion of the population will be needed for the production of raw material. The machinery of productive industry

demands educated intelligence to supervise and guide its direction. This has been one of the causes why the nations of Europe have adopted national systems of education. England, France, and Germany have seen that to hold the markets of the world it is necessary to develop the intelligence of the laboring classes. Austria after Sadowa, and France after Sedan, set about reforming the school system. The German universities conquered at Sedan. The military success of Prussia spurred England to the radical educational measures of 1870. Large sums were given to encourage private schools and the school systems of the towns. On the vane of this reform came the act of August, 1891, making the schools free to all children of compulsory age. France had done this ten years before. Italy and Spain have increased their school attendance to double the number enrolled in 1860. As a whole, the United States appears as enrolling in school quite 23 per cent. of its entire population. This is a better showing than that of any other nation, except Saxony. But many other nations of Europe have a much longer annual school session than we have. *Here is the place to show improvement in future years.* The nations of Europe first made education compulsory; next, as a logical consequence, free. Reasons of self-preservation, both industrial and military, led to this. In our country the political reason was perhaps the first, as it is now the leading motive. The introduction of manual training has become a large feature in recent years, and will grow a larger feature in proportion as cities are called upon to grapple with the population of their slums. Higher education is becoming more practical in that it studies the problems of the people, and endeavors to solve them in the laboratory. University extension has a great role yet to perform to connect itself with the public libraries growing up everywhere in the cities, and to form classes of serious minded men and women throughout the community who are anxious to continue their studies for the sake of culture or for special improvement.

O. B. Rhoades.

On Teaching English Literature. A. M. WILLIAMS. The Educational Times, (Holborn, W. C.), August, 1893.

This article is rather uneven in merit, but contains the following excellent and helpful suggestions.

Of books to be read, then, there are three classes: those only useful for their contents; those useful for their contents and attractive for their style; those giving refined pleasure both by their matter and by their form. Of the three classes only the last two are, in any real sense, literature, and, therefore within the limits of this discussion. Literature, in short, is worthy thought worthily expressed, and our business as teachers is to lead our pupils to appreciate the artistic matter and the artistic form; only in rare instances do we find pupils taking naturally to the best literature, or even to very good literature. This statement is not disproved by the popularity among them of, say, Mr. Stevenson's novels; they are drawn by the direct force of the narrative, and miss nearly everything else that distinguishes Mr. Stevenson's work. Where verse is concerned, the deficiency of appreciation is still more marked. Some trouble is needed to win recognition for the "Lays of Ancient Rome," for Campbell's war lyrics, and for Scott's masterpieces in verse, and when so much has been gained, it is still a far cry to Tennyson and Wordsworth, to Spenser, Milton, and Shakespere, to Matthew Arnold and Landor. Nor is stopping short of the excellent to be accepted, in an easy spirit, as due to difference of taste. The cause is want of taste, truncated development or downright mental deficiency. In the first place, the English teachers' concern is *not* with the subject-matter as information or as rules for conduct. In papers set on Bacon's Essays, I find the following questions:

"1. What are the uses and justification of war?

"2. 'It is a shamefull thing to take the scumme of people to be the people with whom you plant.' Illustrate this by reference to the history of the British Colonies.

"3. What things make an ill seat for a house? Describe the two sides of Bacon's 'Princely Palace.' What does he say about fountains and pools?"

These questions are simply ridiculous; not in the very slightest degree have they any connection with work in English literature. On the other hand, the subject-matter of, say, Shakespere's "King John" does belong to such work, because it has been chosen for artistic purposes. With this preliminary remark, I turn to a consideration of the language of our texts. What the precise language ought to be is sometimes matter for dispute; that is, there are various readings. As a rule, the teacher should trouble his pupils with very little or no textual criticism, but he does well to violate this rule when he can compare different versions by the author.

Grammatical points, including derivation, should not be taken up along with literary criticism, nor in a haphazard manner; the examples should be so chosen and handled as either to illustrate or to develop principles. When principles, and not single words, are handled, the pupil gets a real command of derivation instead of a knowledge of so many instances.

In the early stages of English work, very little literary history is necessary. Some information about the authors read is enough. There is nothing gained by making children get up facts and critical remarks about authors, none of whose writings they have read. And the same is true of older students; "chatter about Shelley" is not literature. Moreover, our literary men and women are now the centre of a very respectable body of writings—biographical and critical—and most of the best of it is easily accessible to learners. Whatever literary history is taught should be such as pupils can less readily handle by themselves. The teaching of English literature need not involve hurried raids into every subject that occupies the wit of man, but has a well-defined field: and while informative in certain definite directions, it is, at the same time, æsthetic and disciplinary.

O. B. R.

Professional Remuneration.

The New York Evening Post, of September 11, contained a long leader reviewing and criticizing the article in the September number of the Forum by President Harper, of the Chicago University, on the pecuniary compensation of professors in American colleges. After showing "the attempt to make out the case of the professor as exceptionally sad to be in several respects fallacious," it comes to the following conclusion, which may give the over-worked and under-paid secondary teacher comfort, or a little malicious pleasure, according to the true inwardness of the creature:

"We pass over President Harper's observations upon the necessity to the college professor of a long vacation, of a private library, of foreign travel, of a pension, of 'keeping up with the procession' in the matter of 'the expenses of respectability.' So far as these observations imply that college professors should be a favored class, we regard them as sophistical. But the whole spirit of President Harper's plea seems to us unfortunate. It painfully suggests the tone of the Grand Army of the Republic, demanding pensions for all soldiers as "salvage." We miss all reference to "plain living and high thinking." We do not ignore the irksomeness of poverty. We do not deny that splendid talents have been made unavailable for scholarly research by the pressure of pecuniary care. But, after all, the pursuit of truth is a joy and a recompense in itself, and the true teacher thinks of many other things than the amount of money that he is earning. Much of the best work in every department of life is done by those who get little pay for it, and from the materialistic point of view this is an injustice to be rectified. That may be true, but the men who do this work re-

ceive a compensation that is not to be measured in dollars and cents. They may look with some bitterness upon their sleek co-workers, "lucky fellows" in the estimation of the world, who do inferior work for higher pay, but they do not give themselves up to repining. They hold, and every brave and true man holds, that all faithful work, all pure, unselfish devotion to truth, is sooner or later rewarded, and they would not stand where they do were their thoughts occupied with the amount of their pecuniary recompense.

O. B. R.

Abolition of Examinations. Evening Post, New York, Sept. 6, 1893.

The abolition in the Cleveland public schools of examinations and the substitution of a monthly ranking system based upon actual work are attracting wide attention. Utica took a step in the same direction last spring, when public examinations were omitted in the ward schools. The Observer of that city recommends that the Cleveland system be adopted by its own trustees. "This bold move," it says, "would seem to be in the nature of a reform that may well be extended to every school in the land. The old system of school examinations long ago outlived its usefulness, and there is nothing to be gained by continuing it. In the first place, it consumes a deal of time that might better be devoted to the every-day study of lessons. It is often the case that weeks are spent by teachers in preparing their pupils for examination at the end of a term or school year, and when these examinations are held, what do they really amount to? They merely display the ability of pupils to answer test questions as to which they have been drilled and rehearsed. As in China the student stands highest who can answer the greatest number of conundrums propounded by the examiners, so false values have been put upon the learning of our boys and girls possessing a certain bright tact that might be termed the gift to answer questions. The desired end will be attained when terms of school begin and end without any claptrap and when the card of standing given the pupil at the end of the term is based on his every-day recitals."

O. B. R.

Bismarck on National Education. The Schoolmaster, (London), August 19, 1893.

On Friday last a deputation of about 600 Bavarian schoolmasters visited Prince Bismarck at Kissingen, and, in answer to the address presented to him, the ex-Chancellor made a long and interesting speech. The future of Germany, he told his hearers, lay to a certain extent in the hands of her school teachers. The schools of Germany were an important unit amongst the national institutions. During the last decades the educational system had borne fruit in the shape of a national political consciousness and a political thoughtfulness which the nation never possessed before. The influence which the schoolmasters had over the country's future, lay in the fact that they received their pupils when young, and that the principles which they then instilled remained more firmly fixed in the minds of those they taught than any learning acquired later. "France gives us an example of the influence which the school can exercise on the national character," said the ex-Chancellor. "During my sojourn in that country, in peace and in war, I had occasion to make myself acquainted with the educational system, and I must confess that France has pursued a method which I should not recommend for Germany. It is to no small extent owing to the influence of its schools that this otherwise highly educated nation is such an uncomfortable neighbor for us. The French schools are the hotbeds of Chauvinism and national vanity, and foster ignorance of the

geography and history of other peoples. Since the days of Napoleon I. the historical instruction is based on history which is little better than pure fabrication, and this must have an injurious effect. We ought to take warning from these symptoms which we notice in France, and strive to rectify by the help of education any unfortunate characteristics which our nation possesses." "Already we owe to our schools," concluded Bismarck, "the thankful task of strengthening the feeling that we are all Germans"—a curious close to a criticism of French national vanity, by the way.

O. B. R.

FOREIGN NOTES.

BITS FROM THE SCOTCH BLUE BOOK FOR '93.

The Schoolmaster, (London), August 19, 1893.

Vastly more interesting than the annual compilations of their English *confrères* are the reports of Drs. Kerr (Southern Division), Ogilvie (Western Division), and Stewart (Northern Division).

"FREE" EDUCATION AND ATTENDANCE.

The general impression is that free education has produced no marked change in regularity of attendance, that the children who attended well before attend quite as well or better now, while those who attended badly before show no improvement. Intermittent attendance appears to be on the increase. It is the old story of the immanence of character. The careless, unconscientious parent shows gratitude for assistance by diminished effort—the worthy parent will send his children as regularly as he can—fees or no fees. I expect that a large proportion of absentees could be sent to school if the parents cared to insist on it.

THE INFLUENCES OF THE REFORMED CODE.

"We have now had a complete year's experience of the operation of the New Code, about the stimulative effects of which, through freedom of classification and the substitution to a large extent of class for individual examination, my colleagues are unanimous. The tendency to overpress the dull and unduly keep back the quicker pupils has been removed. In my own district this has been matter of careful observation, and my distinct impression is that this discretionary power has been on the whole judiciously used. In the infant and junior classes especially the advantages of freedom of classification have been observable. The teachers, instead of aiming at one or two objects as ends in themselves, have felt themselves at liberty to develop in all directions the mental, moral, and physical capabilities of the pupils, while accuracy and advancement in reading, writing, and arithmetic have not suffered, but in many cases improved." This could not very well be improved upon, and it may stand as typical of most of the references in the Blue Book under notice.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

In our reports for recent years we have referred to the results of the inspection of higher schools, which was first undertaken after the reorganization of this department in 1885. We have noted considerable improvement